

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 30

WASHINGTON TIMES
2 October 1985

STEPHEN GREEN

My, what big ears you have, Ivan

When Daniel Patrick Moynihan became U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 1975, he received an urgent warning from Nelson Rockefeller.

Mr. Rockefeller, then vice president, told Mr. Moynihan that every word of his telephone conversations at the United Nations would be monitored by KGB agents.

Now a Democratic senator from New York, Mr. Moynihan still remembers the late Mr. Rockefeller's words of caution. He believes others ought to heed them, too.

The evidence indicates that Soviet agents are eavesdropping on more telephone calls than ever. Defector Arkady Shevchenko has revealed that buildings at the Soviets' summer estate at Glen Cove, Long Island, house telephone interception equipment. In the Bronx, the Soviets have a communications tower

believed to intercept and record microwave telephone transmissions that pass through New York City.

The roof of the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco bristles with microwave equipment and other electronic devices.

So does the roof of the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

The Reagan administration realizes that the KGB's eavesdropping constitutes a serious security threat. Indeed, the threat will intensify when Soviet "diplomats" move into their new embassy on Mount Alto, the highest point in Washington. From there, the KGB's electronic equipment will have a direct line of sight to the Capitol and State Department.

As a countermeasure, the National Security Agency has recommended that the government acquire \$6 billion worth of secure phones. Furthermore, President Reagan recently ordered that car telephones used by his top aides be shielded from eavesdropping.

But that's small consolation for private citizens whose conversa-

tions are recorded by the KGB's electronic devices.

Listening to private calls can be just as useful to the Soviets as recording conversations of government officials. Intelligence obtained from bankers and others in financial

circles could severely damage American interests. Taped conversations about love affairs or other personal matters could be used for blackmail.

The KGB could be stymied if private citizens had access to secure telephones. Such a course, however, would be prohibitively expensive. Secure telephones — known as "user friendly" — cost up to \$35,000 apiece. But far less expensive measures could be taken.

A bill introduced by Mr. Moynihan would authorize the government to expel diplomats and other foreign agents engaged in illegal electronic surveillance.

Curiously, the administration takes exception to the legislation. Officials say the bill is not needed, inasmuch as the president already has sufficient authority.

If so, it is authority that the administration has failed to use. Mr. Moynihan justifiably wonders why an administration that talks so tough to the Soviet Union appears so reluctant to interfere with KGB eavesdropping.

To give the administration its due, recent steps have been taken to guard against espionage.

Prodded by the Walker spy case, security at defense installations has been enhanced. Last week, the State Department restricted the travel of 450 employees of the United Nations, most of them Soviet nationals suspected of spying.

Such long overdue measures are fine as far as they go. But, clearly, more are required.

Earlier this week, the government of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher showed the way. It reduced the number of Soviet officials permitted in England.

Inasmuch as the FBI estimates that 40 percent of Soviet personnel assigned to Washington are involved in eavesdropping, the Reagan administration ought to do the same.

In the meantime, enactment of Sen. Moynihan's bill would at least put the Soviets on notice that the United States no longer intends to tolerate illicit surveillance.

If U.S. law enforcement officers engaged in unconstitutional eavesdropping, there would be loud demands for remedial action.

Americans are entitled to no less than the same protections when foreign agents invade their privacy.

Stephen Green is a nationally syndicated columnist.